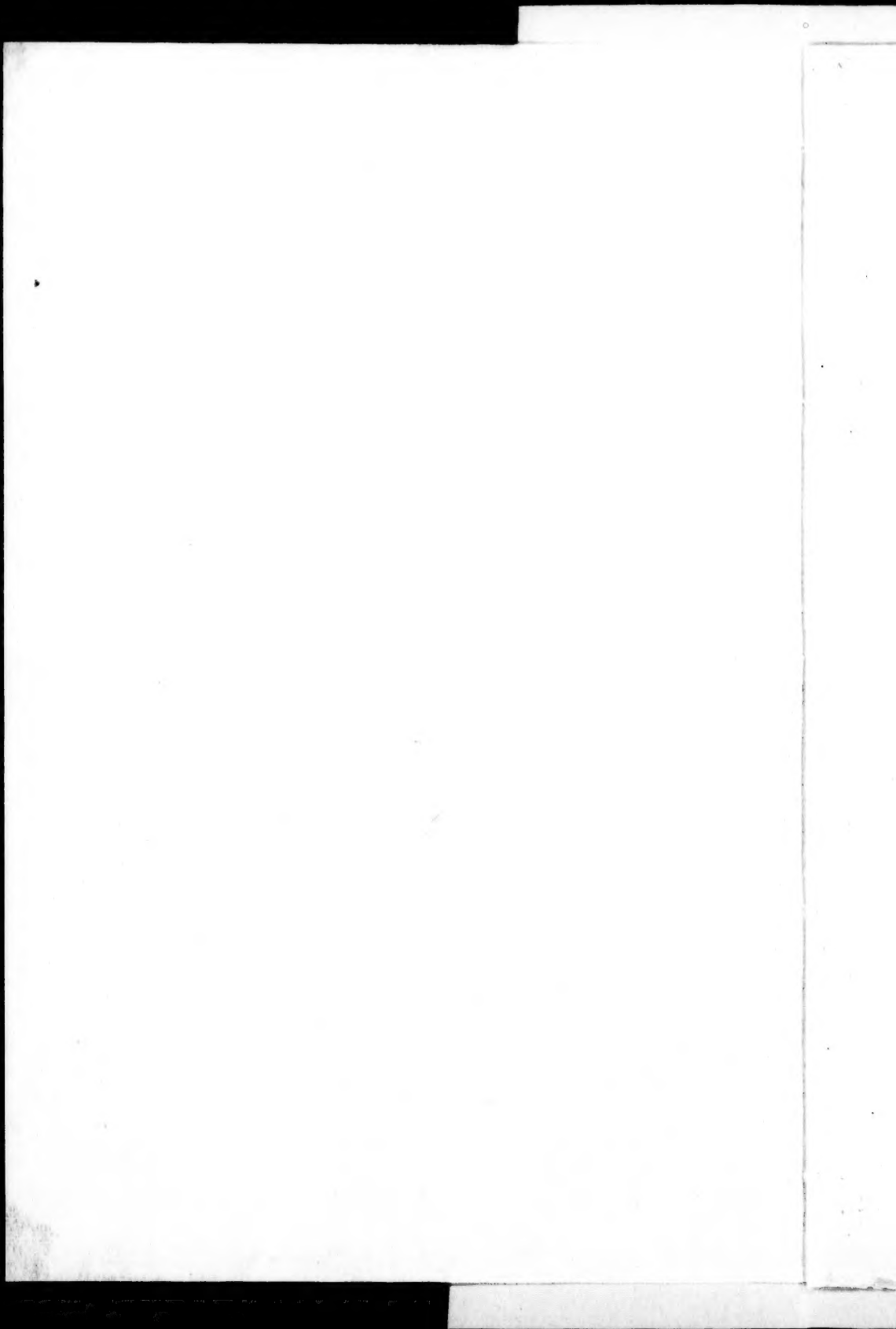
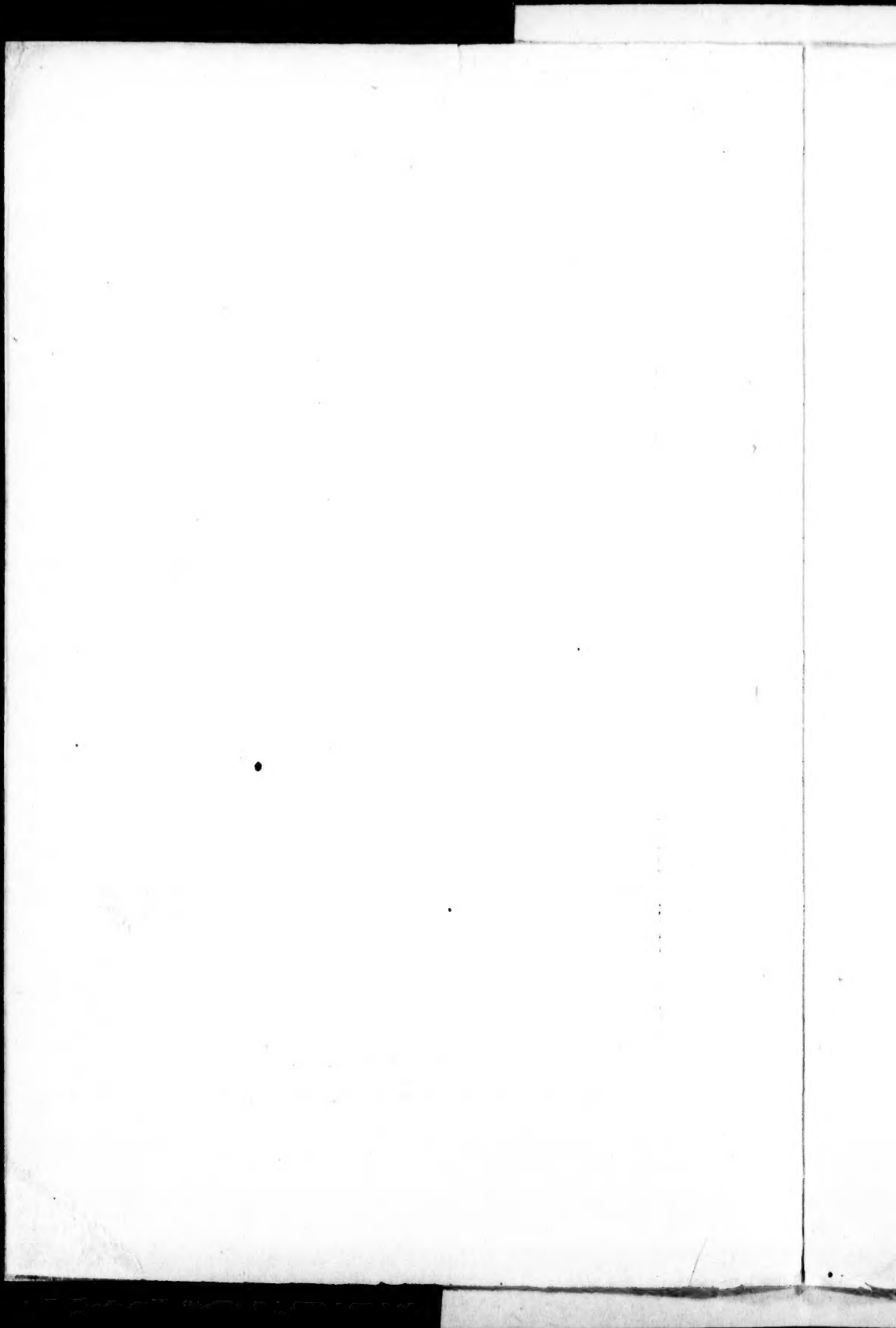




A
SERMON,
DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION
OF THE DEATH OF
CECILIA,
WIFE OF PETER WHITE, ESQ.,
OF PEMBROKE.
ON THE
23rd of FEBRUARY, 1852.

“And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write, ‘Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours and their works do follow them.’”—REV. xiv. 13.

PEMBROKE, C. W.
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1855.



SERMON,

Preached on the occasion of the death of CECILIA, wife of Peter White, Esq., of Pembroke, on the 23rd of February, 1852.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours and their works do follow them."—REV. XIV. 13.

It is better to go to the House of Mourning, than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all living; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter, for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better—the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning. Under the impression of these wholesome truths, we would seek to improve the present mournful occasion; remembering that grace alone can enable us so to do. We will find very little difficulty in complying with the injunction of the wise man, "In the day of prosperity be joyful," but it is quite a different matter to give ourselves to the kind, and degree of consideration, required in the day of adversity; and yet earnest reflection on such occasions—on their causes and consequences, are among the appointed means for our spiritual improvement; which above all we most earnestly desire this day. This important end will most certainly be accomplished if our "hearts are in the house of mourning," and we remember that "this is the end of all living"—yours and mine.

One natural reflection, will be this: "I know Thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living." It is not too much to affirm, that the recollection or forgetfulness of this event, will most certainly affect our latter end. It is not the man who neglects and disregards the evil day, that makes the happiest passage through life, or the safest exit from our sinful world. All men do not die alike, nor is it expected they should,—some die in utter darkness as to their eternal state and take a leap in the dark, others in awful indifference, like the beasts that perish,—some anxiously concerned, and some in frightful apprehension of coming wrath, as if already conscious of the kindlings of the fire that never shall be quenched, and the knowings of the worm that shall never die. This reminds us, dear friends, that *life* is a far more serious and important thing than death, since the circumstances of our dying will be sure to be affected by our manner of living. Life is the seed time for eternity, what we sow here we shall reap there!

Uncertainty, dread uncertainty, encircles the death bed of many of the sons of men,—aye, even of some of those shall be everlastingly saved; but whatever may be the nature of the closing scene, sunshine or storm, hope or fear, God will always take care of his own,—in life he will be continually with them, and they with him, he will guide them with his counsel and afterwards receive them to glory! So taught the prophets,—so Jesus—and his disciples, and how delightful to think, that what Jesus and his disciples taught on earth, should be confirmed by a voice direct from heaven, saying "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord"! Consider—

I. What we are to understand by the phrase, "In the Lord—dying in the Lord."

II. In what the blessedness consists.

III. The pleasing confirmation of the text. "Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours and their works do follow them."

1. Consider the phrase, *In the Lord*—dying in the Lord. Paul in the 17th of the Acts, says: "God gives to all life and breath and all things," and "in him we live, and move, and have our being." The sense in which we are in God or live in God, in this passage, is manifestly to be confined in its application to our animal life, but he speaks of something higher and better in the preceding context:—"if happily they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from any one of us." In the first or physical sense, all mankind live in God; for the air we breathe, the food we eat, the raiment we wear, and the health we enjoy, together with the power of reasoning, choosing, and loving, are all from God. Many live thus naturally in God who are spiritually dead, God is about their bed and their path, and orders all things concerning them; yet they perceive him not, seek him not: the living, immortal spirit is alienated from the life of God,—all the powers of the soul, which are the gift of God, and given to be exercised in his service and to his glory, are in a state of moral death, which may be thus shewn: The understanding does not know God, it is darkened; the eye of this world has blinded the minds of those that believe not; their judgment is perverted and does not approve of God, neither his nature, his law or government are loved; "His ways are always grievous, his judgments high above out of his sight," their *will* does not choose God, they are rebels, their affections do not love or delight in God, they desire not the knowledge of his way,—their conscience does not fear God, they think of him only as an enemy or tyrant, therefore they are, as intellectual beings, without God in the world!

Now this state we have just described, is the very opposite of what is meant by the phrase in the text, "*in the Lord*"—in the Lord, not as a mere animal or intellectual being, but as a moral and spiritual being, made in the image of God, and for his glory. When by the divine spirit we are brought back to God, and in the best and holiest sense we are in God, the principle of a divine and spiritual life is imparted—there is a new creation—a passing from death to life by the mysterious but effectual operation of the Holy Ghost, John 3—5 8, and as man lives *naturally* in God by the enjoyment of the precious benefits of his providence; so do renewed men live in God, by the enjoyment of the still more precious blessings of his grace. Then our life is in God, our desires are to the remembrance of his name; our hopes, our joy, our all is in God. So that to be in the Lord is synonymous with being in Christ—both expressions denoting a near and vital union with God, a being born again of the spirit and from above, and the possession of a new heart and a right spirit. This real and spiritual life in God is easily known, by its language, natural life has a language of its own, so has spiritual: the natural says, "who will show us *any* good?"—the spiritual, "Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us!" the natural has desires—what is all we eat, what shall we drink;" but the spiritual says, O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God the earthliness of the one may be read in the language of the King of Babylon, "Is not this great Babylon which I have built, for the glory of my name and the honor of my majesty," and the spirituality of the other, in the words of Isaiah, "Behold, God is my salvation, the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, he also has become my salvation! I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." This little world contains all the one holds dear; the treasure of the other lies beyond.

As the members are in the body, or the branches in the vine, or Christ in the Father,—so is the believer in God, “In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me and I in you.” To be in God—in Christ is just to realize by a gracious experience the fulfilment of the ancient promise, “I will walk in them and dwell in them”—making the bodies of the people the temple of the Holy Ghost!!

If our exposition of the first phrase “in the Lord,” be correct, the second—“dying in the Lord,” will be very easily understood and soon explained: To “die in the Lord” presupposes our walking by the same rule and minding the same thing, holding fast whereunto we have already attained, to be enduring hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, to endure to the end—overcoming through the blood of the Lamb, the world, the flesh, and the devil. To die in the Lord is just to depart this life in the firm and unshaken belief of realizing the blessed provisions of the covenant of mercy exhibited in the promise of Jesus, “In my Father’s house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you, I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you”! To die in the Lord, is to die in submission to his will, cheerfully drinking the cup he has mingled; in the hope, (strong even in death,) that we shall be like him and see him as he is, and be ever with the Lord.

II. In what their blessedness consists.

“Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.” We are not to suppose that they were never blessed till they died, *that* would be a tremendous argument against religion, as showing that whatever excellency it might possess, and whatever blessing have in reserve for the godly in the world to come; it is not exactly the thing for the *present* world; but it *has* the promise of the life that now is—a promise in every case fulfilled to a greater or less extent. God does not require the people to wait till they *come* to the heavenly country *ere* they are blessed, an *instalment* is graciously paid now! Godliness meets the sinners present necessities—it *finds* him guilty and takes away his sin, and gives him peace—peace in believing. It finds him under the *influence of fear*, but it takes away the spirit of a slave, and gives him that of a *son*; from the moment the soul is enabled by grace to repose its whole confidence in finished work of the Redeemer—all condemnation is gone and it is blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, in the course of his journey, he often finds it good to draw near unto God—he drinks of the brook by the way—the Lord is his shepherd and leads him into green pastures and beside the still waters, his cup of spiritual comfort is often full to overflowing; goodness and mercy follow him, and compass him about. David’s experience may be considered a fair type of God’s dealings with his children, who find him continually with them, taking them by the right hand, guiding them with his counsel, that he may bring them to glory!

2. And as they are blessed in *living* so they are in *dying*. Look at David, walking through the valley of the shadow of death, fearing no evil—and at Stephen, how calm, composed and happy! *happy?* how could he be otherwise, spending his last breath in prayers for his murderous assailants. and, beholding the blessed Redeemer at the right hand of God, waiting to receive his spirit: and Paul, *even in a prison*, in his last moments thought only of the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge would give him in *that* day!

It is a special part of the blessedness of those that die in the Lord, that they are saved from the uncertainty,—the awful uncertainty—the terrible dread of the future, in which many die, not knowing what is before them. Infidel men may speak of a leap in the dark, but light is sown for the

righteous—to them often, light arises out of darkness, its beams often illumine even the shades of death, their comfort arises from *this* conviction, they “knew in whom they have believed,” and from *this* persuasion that they have in heaven a better and more enduring substance, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. O, to be saved from this dread uncertainty, and blessed with a hope blooming with immortality, is a near approach to the bliss of heaven. “The chamber where the good man meets his fate, is privileged beyond the common walks of virtuous life—quite on the verge”—of glory!

3rd. But blessed are the *dead*—ah, men never heard of the *dead* being blessed till heaven revealed it. Christianity alone could teach such a doctrine as that, Philosophers never dreamed of such comfort—their constant dread was—“falling into naught.” For this comfort—the knowledge that the pious *dead* are blessed; we are indebted to him who brought life and immortality to light by the gospel, who is himself the resurrection, the life, and taught that “he that believeth in me shall never die,—though he were dead yet shall he live.”

The worldling cannot conceive the idea of the dead being blest; his whole enjoyment, all he cares for, all he loves, all he values are the profits, the pleasures, and the honors of life; all of which are certainly left behind in death; appetite, passion and animal gratification, all are gone; besides which, he has nothing. Aye, and the sages of antiquity were no better, in their abstract speculations they could not penetrate the future; the display of their genius and talent, by which they awakened the astonishment, and gained the applause of men was necessarily confined to the present world for when they died, their glory was buried in the dust! But blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; death to them is all gain together. If the believer loses his present happiness, it is only to obtain a better and more permanent; the riches of grace will be followed by the riches of glory; and the pleasing contemplation of redemption give place to the enjoyment of the eternal realities. Blessed? because his life is hid with Christ in God—buried deep in the bosom of the eternal Father, secured by sovereign love and the provisions of that covenant, that is ordered in all things and sure, his treasure is in the heavens, safe from moth and rust, where the thief cannot steal and the fire cannot burn it.

4th. There is a negative blessedness of the dead that die in the Lord, which we might notice in passing. All evil is left behind. Solomon praised the dead that were already dead more than the living that were yet alive. because of the grievous oppressions and the sore evils experienced in life—of poverty, misfortune, disease, temptation, and all the accumulated evil to which humanity is exposed in this vain life. In that sense, Solomon was right, and in the same, the pious dead are blessed, for all the sources of their anxiety, their sorrow and pain, shall have passed away for ever. That is a happy thought of the poets,—happy because true—on which, the christian in his last moments may dwell with peculiar delight—

“The pain of life shall then be o’er,
The anguish and distracting care,
Their sighing grief shall weep no more,
And sin shall never enter there!”

No biting frost, nor scorching wind, nor rising flood, nor wasting plague, can follow the happy dead, into the regions of the blest. The lip of calumny, and tongue of slander will find in the grave a boundary they cannot pass.

5th. Blessed in a happy resurrection— that of the just—the dead in Christ shall rise first. They lived, knowing that the Redeemer lived, and though after their skin worms destroyed the body, yet in their flesh they should see God,—they lived, believing the Saviour's word,—“they shall never perish”—“I will raise them up at the last day.”—“because I live, ye shall live also,”—where I am, there shall my servants be,”—and the bliss of the resurrection will consist in the realization of the whole! Jesus in the name of his omnipotence will fulfil his promise, he will gather together the scattered dust of his children's children's bodies, the soul's companion in time, he will build it again on indestructible principles and raise up in his own lovely likeness—“we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is,”—like him in the spirituality of his body; in the eternity of his blessedness; sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body; for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality, and death shall be swallowed up in victory, and then shall the song of triumph be heard—the song written so many ages before shall at length be sung by all who sleep in Jesus—“O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory”!! Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. Once more, Blessed in the full enjoyment of God in Christ to all eternity. Eternity? O that is a mighty expressive word we do not understand and cannot explain, it is like the mysterious existence of him who is the living one, who was and is and shall be unfathomable, unmeasurable, incomprehensible; plummets and guages and lines cannot tell it; and what a thought, how expressive of blessedness, unending happy being, happy in the enjoyment of him who is absolutely independently and eternally blessed, there is no step beyond! with God directly, immediately, no means or sacraments or mediator, the veil of mortality being removed we shall be with God! This hope was the believers comfort and support in time, he could never forget the promise of his Lord, “I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, I will see you again and your hearts shall rejoice, and then no man will take your joy from you, ever with the Lord.” Ah then the people of God, who fed upon his word in time, shall rejoice to know that what was matter of living hope in time, shall be matter of glorious enjoyment in eternity. Neither death or life, nor height nor depth, nor things present, or things to come, shall separate those who in the highest and best sense are one with God. On earth, God's servants were wont to instruct, to lead, to guide, to comfort to feed them—now the servant is wanted no more! the Master will do it himself, with his own hand he will wipe away their tears, with his own voice pronounce them blessed. “God himself shall be there, and be their God and the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to living fountains of water”!—that which Jesus gave his people on earth was living, and was said to “spring up into everlasting life,” and now that it has reached its destination, they find it true, all true, forever true, “not one word has failed of all the good things” he promised,—“fullness of joy, pleasures for evermore, ever with the Lord”!!

III. Notice briefly the pleasing confirmation of the whole. I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, “from heaven,” the blessed announcement is made, possibly the voice of some of the angels that excel in strength or of the angel of the covenant that was wont to speak to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or of Jesus himself, at all events it was a voice from heaven, in which John could not be mistaken, he heard such a voice twice before!—The excellency and truth of what comes from heaven is not to be doubted

The blessedness of the pious dead is twice affirmed in the text—in the heavenly voice from the excellent glory—blessed are the dead that die in the Lord—confirmed again in the testimony of the spirit, yea saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours. And this double testimony is to remain permanently and to have a prominent place in revelation—hence *write,—write*, that it may remain among men a statute of heaven, an immutable decree of the God of truth and love, to be studied in all ages, *Write!* that it may be read and marked by the ungodly as a sufficient answer to the infidel enquiry, “what profit shall we have if we pray,” and as a proof that “godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and that which is to come,” and that its merchandize is better than silver and its gain than fine gold!

Write? to convince sorrowing friends, that those who sleep in Jesus are *not* lost, but only gone before, and that while “mortals cry a man is dead,—angels shout a child is born.” The loss of earth is the gain of heaven!

Write? to assure believers that death will prove no hindrance to or interruption of their felicity—the interruption is but for a moment, it is but a short passage from that which is in part, to that which is in perfect; for we must needs die, and be as water spilled upon the ground, and that is not lost, the marvelous provision of God’s mysterious providence in nature, preserves every drop, and the gracious provision of redemption will preserve body and soul till the coming of the Lord Jesus, and then he will say they are mine!

O, could believers often think, as certainly they should, that the present afflictions a re light, but for a moment and not worthy to be compared with the glory, the glory to which they lead! and that there is a real connection, designed between the sorrows of time and the joys of eternity, that their sorrows are a part of the disciplinary course through which they must pass, *then* would they refuse to weep, as they would discover that sowing in time is but the prelude to reaping with joy, the joy of their Lord. Blessed indeed when all the sorrows and struggles of life, are, through sovereign mercy made to work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! Blest sorrow that will be followed by the wearing of white robes pure and clean, and palms of victory and crowns of glory, all ending in the blessed harmony of heaven, while the whole redeemed of every nation and age, shall say “thou art worthy O Lord to receive glory and honor and blessing, for thou hast redeemed us with thy blood.”

Write? that all generations may know that life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel, and that this world is not the rest of the Lord’s people and that they may gird up the loins of their minds and not be slothful but be followers of them, who inherit the promise. Yea, saith the spirit that they may *rest!* and who shall tell how pure, how calm, how holy that rest, no heart can conceive, no mortal language can tell its bliss. Even in this world, there is a peace that passeth all understanding, a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory! what then must that rest be in the kingdom of God. They rest from their labours,—here they toiled, and wept, and prayed, and wrestled, and doubted, and feared, struggling and fighting against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of the world, and with spiritual wickedness in high places,—“but more than conquerors at last, there they find their trials o’er,” and their works to follow them. Not their merits, but their works, their works not as a recommendation to mercy, but as fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God, as evidences of their sonship and heavenly birth, their works shall follow them. Their faith, patience prayers, love and self-denial, shall shine after their departure, like lights in a dark place to guide the steps of the

weary pilgrim in the path of life. In obedience to their Lord they set their light on the table, on the candlestick, and it gave light—men saw their good works, their patience, long-suffering, forbearance, forgiveness, and active christian charity, they bore a noble testimony to the truth—convincing men of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus—which constrained them to quit their evil ways to enter the narrow path of holiness, and encouraged those who in the midst of hardships, persecutions, and temptations, were often on the point of giving up, to endure hardship as good soldiers in Jesus Christ. Men may forget many things, but the decession,—the firmness, the perseverance of a goodly example they never can! There are doubtless many before the throne, who were first induced to turn their feet into the way of peace, by the good works and pious example of the happy dead,—many who would have fainted in the dark and cloudy day, but for the bright example of some of their deceased friends. The husband, the wife, the son, left to mourn the early removal of some loved one, have been edified cheered and encouraged by the remembrance of those who through much tribulation entered the kingdom of God. The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance—though their fellows may for a season forget them who have gone down to the grave in obscurity, yet the remembrance of what they were when they lived and died, will often return to their thoughts with pleasing and encouraging influence. It is often in this way that the works of the good man follow him, in their influence on his children and fathers and mothers and sisters and friends and neighbours—converted to God through their influence. When we look into the new testament we see religion in its precepts, but there is a happier and stronger influence brought to bear upon our hearts when we see it exemplified in the person and spirit of the *living christian*! And now when we have seen the christian's life,—how safe, how useful, how happy,—above all when we consider his latter end and the glory that awaits him in his father's house,—who? who would not be a christian? who among us would not say "let me die the death of the righteous, and let *my* last end be like his?"

I shall conclude this discourse, with a brief notice of her who has been removed from our midst—who often read and firmly believed the text, and whom, we fondly hope is now enjoying its blessedness. Of the dead we would speak with caution and reserve,—avoiding everything like unbecoming eulogium. We make no pretensions of presenting a perfect character, but a sinful daughter of fallen Adam, saved by grace, through faith in the blood of the atonement.

It is many years since Mrs. White became a subject of divine grace, and if religion has advantages or disadvantages, was pleasing or painful—she had every opportunity of knowing it for many years, and it is no mean proof of the reality of her conversion, that, having put her hand to the plough she did *not* look back. She was one of the happy number who could testify with David, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple," for it was not the eloquence or persuasion of the pulpit, nor the earthquake, nor the thunders of Sinai, nor any human agency, that was the instrument of her conversion, but God's simple truth, earnestly and believingly perused in the quietness and retirement of her own dwelling! God opened her heart like Lydia, to attend the things of which the spirit saith unto the churches. O friends let us never forget that "the holy scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation by faith that is in Christ Jesus." Search the scriptures, love your bibles, consult them frequently. She rested not in the form, she sought the

power of godliness,—she said, Lord, Lord, but she endeavored through grace to *do the things* the Savior said; she loved the means and prized them highly, but looked through all to God! She did not curiously enquire “Lord are there few that be saved,” but she strove to enter the kingdom, nor did she ask “what shall this man do,” but she followed the Saviour. Like Martha, she had her own serving and troubles, but she *chose* the good part with Mary, proved to be good in this, “that it was not taken away from her.” She tried to look to, to love and follow the Saviour, she beheld him in the manger and though she could not present gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh! though she had *not* the alabaster box of precious ointment to anoint the head of her Lord—she presented the sacrifice of a *broken heart*, the affection and obedience of her life! She could not, like the woman in the gospel, minister to the Lord in person, but she remembered the words “the poor ye have always with you—inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me”! This she carried into practical effect. The most loathsome disease did not prevent her attendance upon the sufferer, nor were her ministrations confined to acquaintances or near neighbours or friends, but extended to the stranger and the outcast! The last journeys she made on earth, were on errands of mercy! She found and provided a shelter for the homeless; she spread the couch of rest, and from her own stores (which for Christ’s sake she dealt out with liberal hand) she fed the hungry and clothed the naked, and like an angel of mercy, she nursed and fed with maternal affection her suffering fellows. “Go and do likewise,” and if you want encouragement, here it is, in the words of him “that cannot lie,”—“*They cannot recompense thee, but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just*”! She was no advocate for ostentatious display yet she would let her light shine—she would not give that which is holy unto dogs nor cast her pearls before swine. Possessed of great firmness and decision, she has done that which few christian mothers have had the confidence to do,—in her husband’s absence the family prayers were never omitted. Heaven alone will be able to reveal, how much good praying mothers have done! In early life her house was much disturbed by the presence of persons who cared not to regard the Sabbath, on such occasions she would read the word of God aloud, a device that always succeeded in maintaining the quiet of a Sabbath evening. Her last illness was severe and long continued, which she bore with christian fortitude and patience; the cup her Father mingled she refused not to drink, meekly saying “thy will be done.” Great difficulty in respiration attended her disease—the groan of deep distress was heard, but no complaint, no murmur! On a friend inquiring a short time before her departure, whether she were afraid to die, she replied, “No, she left all in God’s hands,” adding, “I can lay my hand on his bosom, and breathe my life out sweetly there”!

One thought, one only, but a great one, presents itself here,—Mothers may be christians! Christianity is a practicable thing among mothers, with all the anxieties and cares of a rising family, a mother may be a christian.—Mothers mind that, and for your encouragement remember that what grace did for her it can do for you. Let us hope that she who rests from her labours shall find her works following her, in the conversion of all her children to God. Amen.

